

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MILAN 0878

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: DEPUTY EDITOR OF CORRIERE ON ITALY AND EDITORIALS

1. GASPARO BARBIELLINI AMIDEI IS DEPUTY EDITOR OF CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND THUS ONE OF TOP ITALIAN PRESS FIGURES. HE WILL SOON TRAVEL TO U.S. UNDER IVP PROGRAM. USIS DIRECTOR SPOKE WITH HIM MAY 6.

2. ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE. AMIDEI WAS CONVINCED THAT ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION HAD REACHED CRITICAL IF NOT HISTORIC TURNING POINT. DISCUSSIONS UNDERWAY IN ROME AMONG DC, PCI AND OTHER PARTIES COULD LEAD TO DE FACTO PCI PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WITH NEW ANDREOTTI PREMIERSHIP BUT INCLUDING SO-CALLED "TECHNICIANS" (NON-PCI MEMBERS WHO WERE ON PCI TICKET IN LAST YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTIONS). THIS WOULD INVOLVE PRIOR AGREEMENT ON CERTAIN PROGRAMS TO BE INITIATED BY NEW GOVERNMENT. PCI WOULD THEN SUPPORT DC-ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT NOT WITH ABSTENTIONS IN PARLIAMENT BUT WITH POSITIVE VOTES ON KEY ISSUES, PRESUMABLY WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE AFTER MUCH GIVE AND TAKE. IMPORTANT FACTOR WOULD BE REACTION OF U.S., F.R.G. AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS. "TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD WEST
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"PERMIT" SUCH AN ENDEAVOR WITHOUT TURNING FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC SCREWS OR CUTTING OFF IMPORTANT LINES OF CREDIT?" AT SAME TIME, THERE WAS GROWING FEELING THAT MOSCOW WOULD NOT BE HAPPY WITH THIS KIND OF PCI-DC COOPERATION. SOVIETS FEARED THAT BERLINGUER LINE MIGHT LEAD PCI AND OTHER EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES ALONG ROUTE OF WESTERN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.

THERE WERE SERIOUS SUSPICIONS THAT MOSCOW (THE KGB) MIGHT HAVE HAD HAND IN STIMULATING RECENT WAVE OF DISORDERS AND VIOLENCE HERE. "NOT DIRECTLY, BUT PERHAPS THROUGH EASTERN EUROPEAN SECRET SERVICE OPERATIONS" IF SOVIETS WANTED TO CREATE PROBLEMS FOR PCI, THIS WAS ONE WAY TO DO IT. BUT IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO COME UP WITH PROOF FOR THIS THESIS FOR USE IN PRESS CAMPAIGN LIKE THOSE MOUNTED AGAINST CIA IN PAST. IF AND WHEN SOME POOF BECAME AVAILALBE, HE IMPLIED THAT CORRIERE DELLA SERA WOULD PRINT IT.

3. INTERNAL SITUATION AT CORRIERE. AMIDEI SAID THERE WERE NUMBER OF PRESSURES WITHIN CORRIERE AND THAT MONTHS AHEAD MIGHT SEE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES. WHERE CORRIERE WENT DEPENDED ON WHAT HAPPENED ON NATIONAL POLITICAL LEVEL. IF PCI AND DC REACHED SOME KIND OF WORKING AGREEMENT, THERE WERE TWO POSSIBILITIES. FIRST, RIZZOLI WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO CONFIRM OTTONE AS DIRECTOR OR CHIEF EDITOR WHEN HIS TENURE EXPIRED EARLY NEXT YEAR. BUT, SECOND, THERE WAS PERSISTENT RUMOR THAT GIANNI AGNELLI HAD OFFERED OTTONE JOB AS FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR OR "ROVING AMBASSADOR" WHICH OTTONE MIGHT ACCEPT. IN THAT CASE, AND IF WINDS OF CHANGE CONTINUE TO BLOW LEFT, RIZZOLI MIGHT NAME MICHELE TITO AS EDIOTR-IN-CHIEF (AMIDEI CHARACTERIZED TITO AS FURTHER TO LEFT THAN OTTONE). "IF SO," AMIDEI CONFIDED, "I WOULD LOOK FOR DIRECTORSHIP OF ANOTHER DAILY." OR IF DC REFUSED TO COMPROOMISE WITH PCI AND IF TIDE SEEMED TO BE TURNING AWAY FRO LEFT, RIZZOLI MIGHT CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFER NUMBER ONE POSITION TO AMIDEI HIMSELF.

4. CORRIERE EDITORIAL POLICY. AMIDEI CORRECTED OUR IMPRES- SION THAT UNSIGNED CORRIERE EDITORIALS WERE WORK OF OTTONE ALONE. EVER MORNING AT TEN, HE EXPLAINED, OTTONE MEETS WITH TITO AND AMIDEI TO DISCUSS LAYOUT OF PAPER. THEY DISCUSSED PRINCIPAL NATIONAL AND INTERNATIOANLS EVENTS AND ARRIVED ATDECISION AS TO WHAT LEAD EDITORIAL (IF ANY) WOULD BE. NOT ONLY WAS DECISON COLLEGIAL EFFORT, BUT ALSO DRAFTING. MAY 5 LEAD EDITORIAL, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD BEEN DRAFTED BY OTTONE AND HIMSELF, WHILE THAT OF MAY 6 WAS WORK OF OTTONE AND TITO. SOME EDITORIALS, THEN, WERE WORK OF ALL THREE WHILE SOME WERE WORK OF OTTONE ALONE. OTTONE'S EDITORIALS WERE NOTED FOR THEIR CLARITY, PRECISION AND EMPHASIS OF FEW BASIC POINTS, WHEREAS TITO'S AND AMIDEI'S PIECES WERE USUALLY OF GREATER LENGTH AND MORE ELABORATE. ON OCCASION, GIULIO NASCIMBENI WAS CALLED IN TO DO FIRST DRAFT, SUBSEQUENTLY

"CLEARED" BY TITO, AMIDEI AND FINALLY OTTONE. ON THOSE
RARE OCCASIONS WHEN PIECE BORE TIOT'S NAME, IT MEANT
THAT OTTONE WAS NOT IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT (TITO'S LEAD
EDITORIAL OF AY 10 CRITICAL OF LONDON ECONOMIC SUMMIT
IS CASE IN POINT).FINA

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